

OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON THE HISTORY OF
BOSTON COLLEGE

BOSTON COLLEGE REMEMBERED: 1891-1900



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For most Occasional Papers on the History of Boston College, the author is appropriately in the background as researcher and writer. But to get this paper started he must intrude himself very briefly. In the year 1950-1951 the author involved a Graduate School class in a project on Boston College history. Class members were to contact and interview Boston College alumni who had graduated in the decade 1891-1900 to garner from them recollections and impressions of their college years.

In the nineteenth century graduating classes were small. In the century's last decade the total number of graduates was only 217. In the fall of 1950, 40 of these alumni—all of them Golden Eagles in their seventies or perhaps eighties—were identified as living. All but one were in the Greater Boston area.

The class members developed a one-page list of 36 topics on many aspects of college life, which was sent to the alumni with a description of the research project and a request for an interview. The list of topics was intended both to stimulate the graduates' recollections and, hopefully, to give a roughly similar shape to the interviews.

Nineteen of the alumni were able to cooperate in the project. Sixteen were interviewed, while three chose to write letters. As will be seen, two of those letters were the richest product of the class project. But the professor of that 1950-1951 class set aside the reminiscences of those gentlemen of the 1890s because in 1951 he was told to start a School of Education. The project was forgotten until the summer of 1990 when it surfaced in

the author's quarters in St. Mary's Hall. So these alumni recollections, unanalyzed and unreported in 1951, take on added significance forty years later, now 90 to 100 years after the events remembered.

The prize response was a 14-page letter from a venerable priest, Monsignor Michael Splaine, pastor of St. Mary's parish in Brookline. Michael Splaine graduated in 1897. His name is on the wall of the Fulton room in Gasson Hall as winner of the Fulton prize debate in 1896. Upon graduation from Boston College young Splaine entered the North American College in Rome to study for the priesthood. There his rector was also a Boston College alumnus, William H. O'Connell, '81, later archbishop and cardinal. After ordination in 1901 Father Splaine served as chancellor of the archdiocese and rector of the cathedral, and in 1928 he moved to his pastorate in Brookline. A priest of the archdiocese, Father John Saunders, B.C. '34, reports that when he was a seminarian and young priest, Monsignor Splaine was revered as one of the giants of the archdiocese.

Monsignor Splaine's letter is printed below in its entirety. A copy of the handwritten first page is reproduced on pages 14 and 15, showing his large bold script. There is no formal letterhead; he wrote on plain paper. But he made his own pious letterhead—a cross above St. Ignatius' motto AMDG (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, for the greater glory of God)—to which is added per M (*per Mariam*,—through Mary), a piety that was not uncommon in Monsignor Splaine's day.

I was a student at Boston College at the old headquarters in the South End of Boston from Sept. 1894 until graduation in June 1897. The Boston College High School was conducted under the same roof as the college. I remember that some of the College students resented being housed with the High School, but, as far as I was concerned, it did not matter, because we were all students, some young, some older, but all intent on getting an education. This attitude stood me well in life, because I have never been a snob or resented younger students associating with me, as we both struggled for an education. We were all, for the most part, boys from poor homes, & I could never understand the snobbery of some who thought they were entitled to special

privileges because their parents had a little more money. I am happy to say that that spirit was pretty well broken in my time, because decency & good sense finally prevailed. It taught me a lesson which I have used to good advantage all my life. I thank God that I have always been a Commoner.

We were all together in both College & High School about 450 in number when I entered Boston College. I remember well the day when we reached the extraordinary number of 500. We were granted a holiday by good dear old Father Tim Brosnahan, Rector, but he never knew that it was by drafting a likely young fellow from the Ash Cart that circulated around the College we were able to reach the 500 mark. Father Tim Brosnahan was the Rector magnificus all through the 3 years I spent in Boston College. To say that he was a most impressive and dynamic Rector would be putting it mildly. He was a most extraordinary scholar and possessed of an administrative ability that made him one of the outstanding College Presidents of his Day.

It was during his tenure of office that President Eliot of Harvard made an attack on the Ratio Studiorum of the Jesuit Order. Eliot advocated the Elective system which was quite in opposition to the Ratio Studiorum. Father Tim Brosnahan made reply in the Stylus, the official student publication of Boston College. The debate continued for some months & was duly published in the Stylus.

The replies of Father Brosnahan caused a great stir in the Educational Circles of that day. It was the general consensus of the intelligentsia of that period that Father Brosnahan had won a decisive victory. Alas, I have lived to see the day when Boston College has more or less abandoned the Ratio Studiorum of St. Ignatius & gone over to the rival system. "O tempora, O mores." This change of attitude brought forth severe criticism from President Hutchins of the University of Chicago who castigated the Jesuits for abandoning their safe & sure mooring & endeavoring to imitate the example of the Elective system, which he defined as purely experimental. "You have a fixed & stable system. Stick to it." said Hutchins.

The faculty of my day consisted of learned & devoted professors. For absolute dedication to his

task, I give priority to the Rev. Thomas Gasson, S.J. He was an English Convert from Kent in England, close by Canterbury, where he imbibed the Spirit of St. Thomas, the martyred archbishop of that celebrated Minster. He studied in Innsbruck & entered Boston College as a Professor on the same day that I entered as a Student. He was my home room professor all through my course. He spoke German fluently & was still under the spell of that language when he came fresh from his studies to Boston College. I was the first student to be examined by him for admission in 1894. It so happened, that, at my High School in Watertown, I had for 4 years a German professor, by the name of Zuligg. He was a Gymnasium graduate from Germany & he insisted upon giving us a conversational course as well as a reading course in German. Nothing but German was spoken in his classes. He used to take us on long hikes every day &, again, nothing but German was spoken. Naturally I became very fluent in German & when Father Gasson inadvertently addressed me a question in German I replied with the finest of high German pronunciation. A link of friendship was immediately formed which lasted, through the years of my student-hood, out into the years when he was President of Boston College, the founder of Boston College at Chestnut Hill, yes out into the day when he lay dying & sent to me to come & give him a final Blessing. God rest the soul of one of my dearest friends, Father Gasson.

Two of the most brilliant professors under whom I have ever studied were the Reverend Father Fargis in Physics & Chemistry and Father William Duane in Philosophy & Ethics. They were natural imparters of learning & culture. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these two gentlemen which I can only repay by praying for the eternal rest of their dear good souls. They were not only learned & cultured gentlemen themselves but they possessed the knack of being able easily to impart it to others.

A course of immense value to us in connection with our researches in Philosophy was the Physiological course given us by a most eminent Physician of Cambridge, Dr. Francis Barnes. It opened up a vast vista of scientific knowledge. I am happy to pay this

tribute to a devoted Boston College man, not only because of his merit & devotion to Boston College, but also, because he was for many years previous to my Boston College Days, my Sunday School Teacher in the old Parish of St. Patrick's in Watertown. He was very strict as a Sunday School Teacher & also as a College Professor, but we all realized it was for our own good, and, by respectful obedience & cooperation, we all profited immensely from his instructions. He died a most respected & honored Catholic Citizen of Cambridge. May God reward & rest his Apostolic Soul.

I must make proper & well deserved reference to Mr. Joseph Willis our dramatics Instructor. He was indefatigable in his efforts to improve our pronunciation & enunciation of our native tongue. He produced a Shakespearean Comedy every year during the Easter Season and a Shakespearean Tragedy during the Christmas Holidays. In appearance he resembled Edwin Booth, the celebrated Actor. He was always earnest & sincere & the students profited immeasurably from his painstaking coaching. I owe him an immense debt of gratitude, because he selected me many times for the leading role & thus, I came under his special & personal direction. I feel that it has helped me to an extraordinary degree in the public appearances which I have been obliged to make over a long period of years. May God rest his dear good self sacrificing soul.

Another outstanding professor of those early years was the Rev. Daniel Quinn, S.J. professor of Mathematics. He was also the Moderator of our Fulton Debating Society, named after the famed President of Boston College of an earlier day, the Rev. Robert Fulton, S.J., a truly remarkable gentleman.

I joined the Fulton during my first year at College, & was chosen by Father Quinn to be one of the 3 debaters to meet 3 opponents from Georgetown University. It was the first interscholastic Debate held. I regret to say that our side lost, due I am sure to my weakness. The next year I was chosen to be a participant in the fourth Annual Debate of the Fulton, and, thanks to the charity of the Judges, of

whom President Walker of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was Chairman. I was awarded the medal, which reposes today among my souvenirs.

My companions & fellow students at Boston College in those days were an exceptional group of earnest young men anxious to better their station in life. We were just one generation away from our hard toiling fathers & were the first generation of what was then called the collar and cuff generation. Many of them rose to high positions, in Church, State, Medical & legal professions. In the halls of legislation, state & Federal, they have all given a good account of themselves. As I review the years I note with anguish that most of them have passed to the great beyond. Of my own class only 3 remain.

I look upon Boston College today, with its wonderful equipment, its large enrollment of students, its outstanding faculty, as a fulfillment of the great hopes entertained by its founders & friends over the many years. "Esto perpetua." May Boston College long endure to bring luster to the Church & honor to our Country.

At the begining of his truly noble letter, Monsignor Splaine acknowledged that some of his fellow collegians resented the presence of high school boys on the premises of the College. Splaine, the "commoner," did not share this resentment. But the Jesuit administration at Boston College, like those at other Jesuit colleges in the decade of the 1890s, was beginning to doubt the wisdom of operating a college and a high school in the same building. In 1898 separate entrances to the single academic building were provided for the high school and college divisions. In 1899, for the first time, the annual Boston College catalog listed only collegiate courses and only the names of college students. In 1900 the College engaged the services of the real estate firm of Meredith and Grew to locate a site for a new campus for the College, but, while the present Chestnut Hill location was one of the sites recommended, no action was taken on the recommendation until Father Thomas Gasson's accession to the presidency in 1907.

Monsignor Splaine wrote that a holiday was granted when the combined enrollment of college and high school reached 500. (Monsignor Frederick Allchin,

Class of 1900, also remembered a holiday when the enrollment reached 500, while John Johnston, '94, recalled a holiday when 300 was reached.) During the three years Splaine was at Boston College, the college catalog gave as the total enrollment: 1894-1895, 404; 1895-1896, 419; 1896-1897, 443. If a holiday was given for the enrollment meeting a magic number, it undoubtedly was 400, reached in Splaine's first year. But his whimsical story about the "ash can" boy shanghaied to reach the "holiday" number is obviously one of the collegiate myths alumni cherish. Since there were 404 students that year, it would not have been necessary to press anyone into student-for-a-day service. It is also amusing to think that "dear old Father Brosnahan" would be taken in by such a ruse. Incidentally, in 1894 dear Old Father Brosnahan was 38 years old. Undoubtedly to a lad of 20 that might seem old, but it shows the grip of youthful memory when a man of 76 still remembered his youthful rector as old.

It is not surprising that after a lapse of more than 50 years the alumni would err regarding the size of enrollment in the 1890s. But when three or four remember a holiday being given because the College achieved a certain enrollment, the fact of the holiday may be accepted. Similarly several of the graduates besides Monsignor Splaine refer to a Harvard-Boston College tension because of a published debate between President Eliot of Harvard and Father Timothy Brosnahan, president of Boston College. They are correct in reporting a tension and ill feeling involving these gentlemen, but they, along with many later Boston College alumni, have the facts of the matter somewhat muddled. Monsignor Splaine refers to President Eliot's attack on Jesuit education and Father Brosnahan's response as occurring during Brosnahan's presidency—a time reference often repeated in Boston College circles. The fact is that Father Brosnahan's presidency ended in June 1898 and he became a professor of philosophy at Woodstock College, the Jesuit seminary in Maryland. Eliot's broadside against Jesuit colleges appeared in the October 1899 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. President Eliot, of course, had introduced a free elective system into Harvard College, with no prescribed courses. For several decades he had come under blistering attack from his peers in the Ivy League and elsewhere for advocating

chaos in college education. So when, in his *Atlantic* article, he proposed the elective system for high schools, he was probably addressing his peer critics as well as the general public when he asserted that only revelation from on high could validate a uniform curriculum for all—and he then gave the Jesuit system of education and Moslem education following the Koran as examples of such religiously inspired rigid education.

Naturally Jesuit educators throughout the country were stunned by this unexpected and unprovoked attack by a man of such stature in a prestigious journal. Whether Father Brosnahan was asked to answer Eliot is not known, but there is no question that during his presidency at Boston College he established for himself a national leadership role among Jesuits by reason of a thoughtful essay on the Jesuit system of education which he introduced into the College catalog in 1894. The statement found its way, either *in toto* or through adaptation, in the catalogs of at least 14 other Jesuit colleges for a quarter of a century after its appearance in the Boston College catalog, where it was reproduced annually for 57 years. So it was undoubtedly because of his influence *when* he was president of Boston College that he became the person to respond to Eliot two years after he left Boston College.

Unhappily, there were indeed, tensions between Boston College and Harvard in the 1890s. Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison reports that in 1893 (the year before Father Brosnahan's presidency began) "The Law Faculty took the bold step of excluding from the School anyone not a college graduate." (*Three Centuries of Harvard*, p. 338) The Law School published a list of 40 colleges whose graduates would be admitted without an examination, not including any Catholic college. Father J. Havens Richards, president of Georgetown, sent President Eliot the Georgetown catalog along with samples of printed examination questions used at the college. In reply, Eliot, though making some disparaging comments about colleges taught and administered by priests, agreed to place Georgetown on the approved list. Thereupon Boston College and Holy Cross authorities pointed out that their curricula and standards were the same as Georgetown's, and the two New England Jesuit colleges were added to Harvard's approved list. But when Fordham made

the same representation, not only did Fordham not make the list but Boston College and Holy Cross were dropped from it. The Boston College president who succeeded Brosnahan, Father W. G. Read Mullan, had some testy correspondence with Eliot. Nothing immediately was gained by this, but by 1905 the privileged list was omitted from the Law School catalog.

Only Father Thomas Garrahan, '98, connected the hard feeling between Boston College and Harvard to Eliot's position on admission to Harvard's Law School. Judge Timothy Ahearn ('98) said that Boston College Students resented Harvard because of its superior attitude to the "poor Irish" college.

Parenthetically (to put Boston College—Harvard relations in better perspective) it might be noted here that 37 Boston College men had received the M.D. degree from Harvard by 1900. Since the first Boston College class graduated in 1877, that means those 37 M.D. degrees were conferred in 23 years. And when the report was made in the 1899-1900 catalog there were also four Boston College graduates attending Harvard Medical School. In contrast, by 1900 Harvard Law School had conferred the LL.B. upon 8 Boston College men, although six graduates were attending Harvard Law when the report was made. In those days more law degrees were earned by Boston College graduates at Boston University.

To get back to Monsignor Splaine's letter, he was correct in saying there was general agreement that Father Brosnahan's reply to Eliot's *Atlantic Monthly* article was a masterpiece of urbane argumentation. Indeed, as recently as the 1970s Brosnahan's reply was being used as a model in a writing course at Harvard. Father Brosnahan was unsuccessful in having the *Atlantic Monthly* publish his reply to Eliot. It appeared in the *Sacred Heart Review*, and in pamphlet form the reply was distributed widely to educators throughout the country. While *The Stylus* had an article on the controversy, it did not print Father Brosnahan's reply as Monsignor Splaine remembered things.

Monsignor Splaine's letter moved from the masterful writing of his former president to a lament that his alma mater had abandoned the Jesuit Ratio Studiorum. He wrote in 1951. True, the College had dropped the requirement of Greek for the A.B. in 1935. But Latin

was still a requirement for the A.B. until 1957. In 1951 students earned 28 credits in philosophy, considerably more than in Monsignor Splaine's day. In 1951 there were 29 Jesuit moderators of student activities. There were few on-campus resident students in 1951, but as residences were built in the 1950s, 24 Jesuits were serving as dormitory prefects in addition to their academic responsibilities. In 1951 Boston College was closer to the College of 1900 than to the College of 1991. So one fears that if Monsignor Splaine had lived another decade or two, his response to the Boston College query might have been less benign than it was.

The good monsignor gave a lively picture of Father Gasson, fresh from his theological studies in Innsbruck, Austria, meeting the young Watertown high graduate just entering Boston College and a bond forming between them based on their German language facility. Were it not for this letter, we would not know that the bond between the two clerics was so strong that on his deathbed Gasson asked for and received the Monsignor's blessing.

Among teachers singled out for praise by Monsignor Splaine was Dr. Francis Barnes of the class of 1884, a graduate of Harvard Medical School. One of the progressive academic actions Father Brosnahan took when president was to introduce a course in physiological psychology for all seniors, taught by Dr. Barnes. Several of the alumni interviewed noted that the course was invaluable for students planning to enter medical school, but clearly Father Brosnahan was interested in having all seniors become acquainted with a scientific approach to human life, supplementing the approach of philosophical psychology. Obviously in Splaine's eyes, the Boston College president had done him a favor in introducing the course with Dr. Barnes as teacher.

Mr. Joseph Willis of the class of 1890 was a respected and admired member of the faculty. Besides teaching the classics, he was coach of dramatics, and it was this role that the alumni mentioned with feeling. A contemporary, Daniel Gallagher, '92, later attorney general, remembered him as an excellent student and a superb actor. Monsignor Allchin, 1900, called Willis "a regular Mr. Chips." That Joseph Willis had a dramatic flare even when not close to a stage is affirmed

by Father Francis McManus of the current St. Mary's community, who as a boy was a next-door neighbor to Joe Willis and remembers Willis leaving his home in Roxbury for his daily trip to the College decked out in cutaway coat and formal gray striped pants. Monsignor Splaine correctly remembered the Shakespearean tragedy at Christmas time and the comedy at Easter. The College catalogs in the 1890s stated that two plays of Shakespeare were to be read each year by all the students of the College and the Preparatory School—for example *Julius Caesar* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the tragedy to be presented by collegians after Christmas and the comedy by the preparatory students at Easter. So drama involved the entire student body, and several of the alumni mentioned the seasonal plays as highlights of the year, always playing to full houses.

Monsignor Splaine was grateful for his experience as a Fulton debater as he was for his experience in drama under Mr. Willis' able direction. His letter ends with a benediction on his alma mater—"May she prosper forever." This remarkable letter from a saintly man was probably his last communication to Boston College. He died in October 1951.

A few topics were mentioned by most of the alumni. One of these was the fact that each day started with Mass at 8:30, and students were expected to be there. Daniel Gallagher, '92, who had a lively memory, reported that one South Boston lad who occasionally was late for Mass gave as his excuse that the Ferry St. bridge was open—an excuse that worked until the prefect learned there was no such bridge. This story anticipated a later one, after the College had moved to the Heights, according to which a student using public transportation from Salem was upbraided for being late while a chap who gave his home as Faneuil was excused because the dean of discipline was unaware that Faneuil was a neighborhood at the foot of Lake Street in Brighton.

On the academic side, the feature most often mentioned was the daily themes, said by one alumnus to alternate between Latin and Greek during the week, with a major English theme on the weekend. No one complained about the themes. With the traditional Jesuit emphasis on philosophy, it is surprising that not one graduate commented on the philosophy course except to say that it was conducted in Latin—and that may have

had something to do with the lack of enthusiasm for it. Also the gentlemen attending the College in the 1890s had philosophy only in the senior year. As the century ended, philosophy became the major subject in both junior and senior years.

These Boston College graduates had three collegiate years of Latin and Greek, and many seem to have become passingly competent in speaking Latin. Michael White of the class of '94 remembered that on the streetcar the B.C. boys would talk Latin within earshot of young ladies, to impress and "bother" them. White graduated from Harvard Medical School and interned at Carney hospital. During his internship he was asked to accompany a mentally disordered priest to Mt. Hope hospital in Baltimore. During the trip Dr. White was able to maintain rapport with the priest by conversing with him in Latin, but the young doctor was stunned when the priest cursed him (he didn't mention in what language) when they arrived at the hospital. Dr. White was one of several alumni who were emphatically convinced that having senior philosophy in Latin was beneficial. Daniel Gallagher, '92, agreed and noted that some of the professors of subjects other than philosophy occasionally "lapsed" into Latin. Monsignor Allchin, class of 1900, recalled the final 15-minute oral examination in philosophy with seven Jesuits (including the president) asking the questions and the entire proceeding conducted in Latin. Only Judge Timothy Ahearn ('98) declared that having philosophy classes in Latin was a mistake. Incidentally the senior courses in philosophy continued to be taught in Latin until 1917.

A course that drew uniformly warm praise was the Friday afternoon elocution class taught by Samuel Kelley. The entire student body, averaging about 125 in the 1890s, met in the College hall for the class. Kelley must have been an outstanding teacher to have his course commented on favorably by so many alumni. The subject, the setting (a large auditorium, with a mixed class makeup including everyone from freshmen to seniors), and the time (late Friday afternoon) seem to have had the potential for disaster under unskilled tutelage. But this experience was clearly stimulating and memorable for Kelley's students. Several of the alumni mentioned that Kelley was a Protestant. They may have done so because he was undoubtedly the only non-

Catholic professor they had during their college years. Or they may have thought it unusual, if not unthinkable, that a person named Kelley was not Catholic. In any case their awareness of the teacher's religion in no way influenced their reaction to him as students or their admiration for him as alumni.

There was remarkable consistency among the graduates as to the best remembered teachers. Easily the most frequently mentioned and most warmly praised was Charles Macksey, S.J., who taught as a scholastic in 1890-91 (when his students were high school lads taking classics, mathematics, and French with him), and as a priest from 1896 to 1898 (when he taught collegians rhetoric, classics, and calculus). So although he was at Boston College only three years, he made a lasting impression. And he was remembered for incidents outside the classroom. Besides Monsignor Splaine's touching letter, the other sterling written response came from Joseph Loughry of the class of 1899. He wrote:

In my book Father Macksey was outstanding. He taught Junior class and math. He understood boys. One day after class some boys had been engaged in boxing lessons in the gym. As they left they met Father Macksey. He spotted the gloves, said he hadn't had on a pair in years, and asked for a little sparring, just tapping, etc. The best boxer in the group put on the gloves. They were quite fancy with each other but Father Macksey was landing all the jabs, fast as a dancing master on his feet. Finally our boxer, nettled a bit, let go a right swing with plenty of pep. Father Macksey stepped inside and snapped a stinging jab. Then, pretending to be winded, he said "That's all boys. Thanks," and off he went.

The Boston College students correctly spotted a star in Father Macksey, who went on to teach philosophy and theology at the Jesuit seminary in Woodstock, Maryland, served briefly as dean at Georgetown, and then was sent to the Gregorian University in Rome to teach philosophy.

Another teacher mentioned by many of the graduates was Father Patrick Cormican. Joseph Powers, '99, former headmaster at Boston Latin School, remembered Father Cormican as both strict and humorous, a teacher who found it difficult to stand in front of the class and

and separate

Thompson M. J. Glavin. B.C. 1894 / (1897)

I was a student at Boston College at the old headquarters at the South End of Boston from Sept 1894 until graduation in June 1897. The Boston College High School was conducted under the same prof as the College. I remember that some of the College students resented being housed with the High School, but, as far as I was concerned, it did not matter, because ~~we~~ ^{we} were all students, some young, some older, but all intent on getting an education. His attitude stood me well in life, because I have never been a snob or resented younger students associating with me, as we both

so conducted class while walking up and down at the back of the room, a peculiarity mentioned by others. He was praised as a poet and literary critic. Powers said that if a student faltered or was unprepared, Father Cormican's standard response, delivered with a deep Irish brogue was, "Sell your books. You're wasting your time."

One thing that emerges from the names of faculty mentioned by the alumni is that the Jesuit Provincial was sending highly talented men to serve Boston College in the 1890s. The Society of Jesus regularly selects men of outstanding leadership and intelligence to be teachers of Jesuits in training for the priesthood, and this is especially true of men assigned to philosophical and theological faculties. We have already noted that Father Macksey taught at Woodstock College and the Gregorian University after his service at Boston College. Other Jesuits mentioned by the alumni of the 1890-1900 period who later taught at Woodstock were Father Henry Casten, Father A. J. Elder Mullan, Father William Duane, and Father Timothy Brosnahan. Father Mullan was dean at Woodstock. He also spent a five-year term as part of Father General's secretariat in Rome. Other Jesuit teachers of that decade who held important positions were Father John Quirk, later dean at Fordham and president of Loyola College, Maryland; Father August Duarte, later dean at Gonzaga College in Washington; and Father Francis J. Donnelly, later prolific writer on Jesuit humanistic education and dean of the Province's liberal arts college for its seminarians at St. Andrew's-on-Hudson. When one considers that at this time the sprawling Maryland-New York Province was supplying Jesuits to ten other colleges, the presence at Boston College of men such as those just listed and others of equal stature not named by any of the alumni is proof that Boston College was receiving very favorable treatment in the assignment of Jesuit talent.

Some interesting points were made by only a single alumnus, but even such isolated declarations are enlightening. For example, Joseph Powers, '99, mentioned that each class day began with the recitation of the Our Father either in Latin or in Greek. Since he later was headmaster of Boston Latin School, it is likely that his memory on this point was correct. Monsignor Michael Scanlon, '95, recalled that at his graduation the

seventeen seniors did not wear caps and gowns because the president, Father Brosnahan, said that would be an imitation of Harvard, which seems to indicate that Brosnahan did not feel kindly toward Harvard even before Eliot's 1899 attack on Jesuit education. In place of caps and gowns the seniors wore Prince Albert suits and stovepipe hats, the rental fee for the suits being \$2.50. Those who could afford to do so hired hacks and took their parents out to dinner after graduation.

Daniel Gallagher, '92, who gave a long and rich interview, recalled that some Protestants called Boston College the Irish High School, a derisive interpretation of the letters IHS which had been the monogram on the caps of the Boston College cadets of earlier days. His recollection of the derisive comment is undoubtedly correct, but his explanation doesn't stand up, because photographs of the cadet uniforms show the letters B.C. on the cap. However, until 1913 the Boston College seal prominently featured the letters IHS surmounted by a plain cross. It is quite possible that the cadets carried a banner with the College seal on it. (See pages 18-19.)

Dr. Michael Burke, '92, told his interviewer that he enjoyed telling the younger generations of the hardships men of his time underwent to get a college education. Each morning he walked two miles to Wellesley to catch the train to Back Bay, and from there walked to Harrison Avenue. He figured he walked ten miles a day for eight years. Dr. Burke captained the baseball team and, when asked where the team practiced, he replied, "We practiced when we played someone."

Few of the students in the 1890s worked during the school year. Several mentioned that jobs were scarce. Daniel Gallagher said that home chores such as chopping wood and milking cows kept boys from the more rural areas busy.

Monsignor Michael Scanlon, '95, lived in East Boston. His father was a freight shipper, and it was Michael's job to get up at six each morning and see that the men fed the horses. He took the East Boston ferry and walked to the South End from the Boston landing in good weather. He sold hats in a downtown store during vacation time for \$2.50 a day and allowed himself a 25¢ supper every day, adding that he was just feeding himself, not the rest of the world. The most common employment during the school year, mentioned by only



Boston College cadet uniform with the initials 'B.C.' on the cap.

CATALOGUE
OFFICERS AND STUDENTS
BOSTON COLLEGE
1882-83.



CHARLES K. LINSLEY & CO. PRINTERS, FINESTREET, BOSTON.

The Boston College seal that appeared in annual catalogs, 1882-1913, featured the letters IHS.

a few, was ushering in theaters nights and weekends.

The chattiest, most anecdotal letter came from Joseph L. Loughry, '99. The College catalog of 1907 gave the names and occupations of all alumni, listing Loughry as "in business." But by the time of the 1951 survey he was retired, living in Manomet. The class member who contacted him was Sister Mary Michaeline. He wrote her two letters—one of three pages, the second of two pages, single spaced—with afterthoughts typed on the back of the last page of each letter. While he was self-deprecating regarding his college career, his letters show that those many themes written for the Jesuits gave him a style that would have made him a successful journalist or author. Here is the opening of the first letter:

Your letter of the 9th inst. with enclosed quiz program [list of suggested topics] quickly unveiled the rearview mirror of my mind, or what passes for it. How long indeed the road behind, how short the road ahead! Why are there so many blank spots? Why did the etching needle plunge deeper into the cranial convolution in various instances? And for other periods of time apparently glide along without the faintest scratch?

I fear I never took college seriously. Lessons were so easily learned and alas! so quickly forgotten. I might sum up eight years at B.C., four prep., four collegiate, as a journey during which I travelled by train, trolley car and on foot a distance of about twenty-five thousand miles to acquire knowledge, and missed the boat.

Loughry went on to name the academic stars and prize winners of his class, and it is good to see that among them he named two men who later taught for many years at their alma mater, one as a layman, the other as a Jesuit. Father Jones I. Corrigan was a truly distinguished and respected professor of ethics from 1917 until his death in 1937. Eugene Feeley was a stalwart in the Classics Department from 1917 to 1949. Comparing himself with such luminaries, Loughry wrote, no doubt tongue-in-cheek: "My only appearance in that line of endeavor was capturing the prize, *Life of Christ* printed in Greek, for reciting from memory the rules of prosody in record time which still stands, I believe, 3 minutes

and 32 seconds.” It was also refreshing to read Loughry’s encomium on another important person in this survey, Daniel Gallagher, later attorney general and U.S. attorney. Gallagher graduated in 1892, so Loughry would have known him as a student only during Loughry’s first two high school years. He wrote: “Of course one amazing fellow was Daniel J. Gallagher, ’92, who graduated when 18 and won the Fulton Medal by tearing up (figuratively) his prepared paper and tearing contemptuously into his opponent *ex tempore*.”

Several of the alumni expressed the opinion that the Jesuits were not particularly in favor of athletics, although countering this view is the statement of one graduate that a Jesuit scholastic had visited his home outside of Boston to persuade his parents to let their son play baseball. Here is Loughry’s view.

Athletics! In the eyes of the faculty an athlete was a pariah. The College had a baseball team that played two or three games a year, with Campello Athletic Club of Brockton, Holy Cross, and beginning in 1896 with Bates, Colby and the University of Maine. The Class of ’99 had its own ball team in ’95 and ’96. In the latter year M.I.T. asked us to play a practice game with them in Franklin Field. We were short a couple of players. I brought in from Waltham a wonderful player. He was prematurely bald. He could throw and bat right and left-handed with equal skill. He played second base for us though his pet position was catcher. We were leading M.I.T. along about the seventh inning when they got a couple of men on base. A grounder went down between first and second. Sully (Jack Sullivan) saw he could not make a regulation play. He took off his fielding glove as he tore after the ball, made a left-handed throw to first and then doubled the runner trying for second. While scooting after the ball he lost his cap. The M.I.T. captain called time, quizzed us about Sullivan, and then they called off the game. I later played on the college team, also on the hockey team. But athletics were frowned upon by the faculty.

Boston College men of the 1890s, particularly those not aspiring to priesthood, were interested in the young ladies who lived in the New England Conservatory of Music just across from the College on James Street. Two

priests and two laymen commented on the presence of the conservatory girls. Father Thomas Granahan, '98, chaplain at Marycliff Academy in Winchester, recalled that in his days at the College "the only distracting influence" was the Conservatory of Music nearby. Father James Kilroy, S.J., '96, who had served as rector of the Jesuit seminary and provincial of New England Jesuits, was quoted by his interviewer:

The New England Conservatory of Music (for girls only then) was located directly across the street and you can well imagine how difficult it was to keep a school full of boys completely aloof from a school full of girls—and vice versa. The sound of girls practicing vocal lessons was a great temptation to the boys.

The laymen had more favorable recollections. One was the former attorney general, Daniel Gallagher, '92, who was described by his interviewer as a white-haired and sage-looking patriarch who made the student feel Gallagher was "The living embodiment of that spirit of mental refinement and excellence that is the goal of the Ratio Studiorum." At the end of a long report on the interview—eight and a half single-spaced pages—the conservatory issue came up and is quoted here exactly as the student wrote it:

The New England Conservatory of Music was then located where the Franklin Square House now stands on James St. and the overwhelming majority of its enrollment was young and female. A "stage" policeman employed by the Conservatory patrolled James St. to assure the young ladies of the proper seclusion. However the Conservatory girls and the B.C. boys used to communicate by flashing a signal code with mirrors and it was not uncommon to see a "lover's light" prancing on the blackboard. Mr. D. J. Gallagher steadfastly denies that he ever practiced this system of communication, used the code, or was aware of the intricacies of its meaning—THE OLD RASCAL!

As the reader by now must expect, the other layman was the lively letter writer, Joseph Loughry. He had two anecdotes, one in each of his two letters of reminiscence:

There never was any trouble with local families, not even with the girls in the New England Conservatory. An organ grinder was wont to come through James Street about when we had recess for lunch. One day Dixie (Thomas J.) Vahey borrowed the organ and the monkey and serenaded the girls in the conservatory. That was the best collection the organ grinder ever had, but the Faculty clamped down on any repetition.

Loughry's second reflection on the subject came in a postscript to his second letter:

Memory just whispered, Don't forget Dan Doherty. Rev. Daniel Doherty, S.J., was with us a short while in 1892 as Prefect of Discipline. One day in the Spring after baseball practice five of us snuck up to the attic to play penny ante poker. One boy suddenly said, "Look, fellers, look." We looked. A girl in the conservatory across James Street was in her room dolling up, perhaps for the evening. No more poker. A few minutes later came a rasping voice: "Get out of here and quick." It was Father Doherty. Abashed, we made our exit, that is, all of us except Jack Harte, who was catcher on the ball team. As he sidled by Father Doherty he asked: "How long have you been watching Father?" and successfully dodged a swing aimed at his ear.

One subject on which there was a variety of recollections—not necessarily conflicting—was the accommodations for lunch. Daniel Gallagher, '92, recalled that a Mary Kane ran the lunch concession in the basement. An ample lunch could be purchased for fifteen or twenty cents. Milk was three cents and a well-filled meat sandwich five cents. Thomas Greene, '98, said lunch could be purchased at a counter in the gymnasium, but he said he never ate there. A group of students used to meet at a hotel on Washington Street. Father Henry Brock, S.J., '97, remembered a small cafeteria across the street run by two venerable spinsters where they used to get coffee and doughnuts. A more colorful report came from Monsignor Frederic Allchin, 1900, who said a good, magnificent woman in the neighborhood operated a boarding house and offered Boston College students a good, warm dinner for 25

cents. When word spread around the College about this wonderful generosity, the boys swarmed to her boarding house, until one day the woman's daughter told them this magnificent treat would have to stop as there were too many patrons and far too much food consumed.

At this point in the narrative there will be a slight digression to demonstrate the testamentary value of the reminiscences of the gentlemen of the 1890s, but, as will be seen, the digression has to do with lunch, so there is that connection. In November 1989 Father Monan received an inquiry from a group in Canada that was planning an international symposium on athletics. The organizers had a document showing that Pierre de Coubertin, the Frenchman famed for reinstituting international Olympics in 1896, had in 1890 visited Boston College as part of a survey of athletic programs in American universities. In a book, *Universites Transatlantiques*, published in Paris in 1890, de Coubertin had this interesting paragraph on Boston College:

This morning I paid a visit to Boston College, which is run by the Jesuits. 300 students, all externs; building is taking place which allows the number to rise to 500; old classical education and use of the Latin tongue to ask permission to leave class. Outside of that everything is rather modern. The Fathers do not encourage sports, but they do not belittle them in any way; there is a tennis court and a gymnasium for the brief moments of recreation. On the ground floor I spotted a saleslady behind her counter. She sells the students, at strictly controlled prices, bread, meat, beer and chocolate for their lunch.

That was de Coubertin's summary of his Boston College visit. Unfortunately nothing in any Boston College record noted the fact of his visit. So we were not able to satisfy our Canadian correspondents, but thanked them profusely for de Coubertin's delightful little vignette. During Father Robert Fulton's second term as president, 1888-1891, he extended the college building at both ends by 100 feet on James Street. So the French visitor was correct about the expansion and the increased capacity of the building.

The assertion by de Coubertin that students had to ask in Latin to be excused from the classroom could be

neither affirmed or denied by any written evidence or collective memory, until Dr. Michael White, '94, said to his interviewer in 1951 that "even if necessary to be relieved one had to ask permission in Latin." That corroborates de Coubertin's observation.

The tepid or ambivalent attitude of Jesuits towards sports that came out of the interviews is also confirmed by our French visitor. And since he was keen on sports, his mild interpretation of the faculty attitude means he saw no overt hostility.

The most intriguing sentence in de Coubertin's brief sketch is the one about beer available at lunch. The visitor's observations during his short stay were so sharp and accurate, that we began to think that maybe serving beer to young men was so common at that time that its being served at lunch never deserved mention in College records. So we were in a state of doubt on the subject until the sophisticated Joseph Loughry of Manomet wrote two simple sentences: "Lunch could be bought daily in the recreation hall in the basement of the college. Most students brought lunch from home and bought only coffee or milk." Had beer been available, would Joseph Loughry have missed it? Hardly. So where did de Coubertin get the idea about beer and chocolate? From the saleslady, whose English he could not understand? But though de Coubertin was an honorable and respected world figure, when it comes to the credibility of his report on liquid refreshment on the basis of a one-day visit compared with Loughry's eight-year experience, we must go with Loughry. Our 1951 class exercise, examined in the summer of 1990, helped solve historical questions of 1890.

There is another example. The college catalog of 1893-1894 was the first to list each student's home town or neighborhood. Some of the cities and towns named were Holyoke, North Brookfield, Fall River, Lowell, Lawrence, and Worcester. Each year during the 1890s the first information the catalog gave under the rubric "Admission" was this: "Boston College is for day-scholars only. No student will be admitted who does not reside with his parents or immediate relatives, or, if this is impossible, with persons duly approved by the President of the College." The question for the historian is, were students in the 1890s able to commute from distant localities because of the excellent train service

that developed at that time or were some given permission to live near the College? University records are silent on the subject. Dr. Michael White, '94, supplied the answer: There were no boarders in his time; out-of-towners rented rooms near B.C. White himself lived in Plymouth and, because he worked nights at the railroad crossing in Plymouth, he had a pass on the train for Boston, and he added that the service was good. It was sad to read in the report of the interview with Dr. White's classmate, John Johnston, that the good doctor had died in January 1951 very shortly after his helpful cooperation with a graduate student.

The students enjoyed the historical project as much as did the men of the 1890s. One student concluded his report of his interview with Thomas Greene, '98, with these words: "With this his wife Anne came in and she began giving him a hard time about B.C.'s 1950 football fortunes [the team went 0-9-1 that year!] and before civil war broke out I thanked them and safely made my exit with joy and happiness for the opportunity to have visited such a fine intellectual and spiritual man, a true B.C. man."

The noble gentlemen of the 1890s, as well as the class members who interviewed them in 1951, deserve a salute from all concerned about the history of Boston College. Let Monsignor Splaine have the last word, with his benediction: "Esto perpetua. May Boston College long endure to bring luster to the church and honor to our country."

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The names of two prominent contributors to this paper, Daniel Gallagher and Michael Splaine, are inscribed on the wall of the Fulton room in Gasson Hall as winners of the prize debate.

Rose Mary Donahue
Boto1ph House